

**Town of Chester
Budget Committee Meeting
Thursday, February 13, 2020
Municipal Complex
Draft Minutes**

The Budget Committee departed the BOS meeting and reconvened in the Rangeway Meeting room at 8:45 pm.

Attendance

Committee Members Present:

Mike Weider, Chairperson
Rhonda Lamphere, Vice-Chair
Ephraim Dobbins
Kathy Guilmette
Brennan Holmes, School Board Liaison

Committee Members Not Present:

Stephen Landau, BOS Liaison

The Committee proceeded to vote on each warrant article.

Warrant Articles

Article #9 – Road Bond

(Passage of this article shall override the 10 percent limitation imposed on this appropriation due to the non-recommendation of the Budget Committee.)

Special Warrant Article. Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of three million dollars (\$3,000,000) for road improvements; and to authorize the issuance of not more than three million dollars (\$3,000,000) of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (NH RSA 33) and to authorize the Board of Selectman to issue, negotiate, sell, and deliver such bonds or notes and to determine the rates of interest thereon and the maturity and other terms thereof; and to authorize the Board of Selectman to apply for, obtain, and accept any aid or funds from the State of New Hampshire, the Federal Government, and private sources, if any, as they may become available for said project and to comply with all laws applicable to said project; to authorize the Board of Selectmen to take any other action or pass any other vote relative thereto; and further to raise and appropriate thirty-seven thousand seven hundred eight dollars and thirty-three cents (\$37,708.33) for the first year's interest payment. This Article must pass by a 2/3 ballot vote.

Estimated Tax Impact: *\$0.05 (first year only)*
Recommended by Board of Selectmen *Tally Vote – 4 yes/ 1 no / 0 abstain*
Recommended by Budget Committee *Tally Vote – 0 yes/ 5 no/ 0 abstain*

Article #10 – Two New Fulltime Firefighters

Special Warrant Article. Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred ninety-two thousand four hundred ninety-one dollars (\$192,491) for the purpose of hiring and outfitting two (2) fulltime career firefighters/EMTs in order that the Town may have coverage twelve hours a day, seven days a week. One hundred five thousand two hundred fifty dollars (\$105,250) is for wages, one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500) is for outfitting, and eighty-five thousand seven hundred forty-one dollars (\$85,741) is for benefits.

Estimated Tax Impact: *\$0.27*
Recommended by Board of Selectmen *Tally Vote – 5 yes/ 0 no/ 0 abstain*
Recommended by Budget Committee *Tally Vote – 5 yes/ 0 no/ 0 abstain*

Article #11 – Steeple Repair at Chester Congregational Church

Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) for the purpose of helping to defray the expense of structural work on the steeple of the Chester Congregational Church which houses the Town Clock. The actual amount of said donation is to be conditioned upon the Congregational Church raising an equal amount of funding between Town Meeting of March 10th, 2020 and Town Meeting of March 9th, 2021. The amount donated will not exceed twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000).

Estimated Tax Impact: *\$0.04*
Recommended by Board of Selectmen *Tally Vote – 5 yes/ 0 no / 0 abstain*
Recommended by Budget Committee *Tally Vote- 3 yes/ 0 no/ 2 abstain*

Article #12 – Optional Tax Credit for Combat Service

Shall the Town adopt the Optional Tax Credit for Combat Service per RSA 72:28-c in the amount of five hundred dollars (\$500) per year. To qualify, a person shall be a resident of this Town engaged at any point during the Taxable period in combat service as a member of the New Hampshire National Guard or a reserve component of the United States armed services, called to active duty. This credit would be in lieu of and not in addition to the standard and optional Veteran's credits. The service member would be eligible for the credit in each tax year in which the combat service occurs. If passed, this credit would be effective as of April 1, 2020.

Estimated Tax Impact: *\$0.00*
Recommended by Board of Selectmen *Tally Vote – 5 yes/ 0 no / 0 abstain*
Recommended by Budget Committee *Tally Vote – 5 yes/ 0 no/ 0 abstain*

Article #13 – Establish PACT Revolving Fund

Shall the Town vote to establish a revolving fund pursuant to RSA 31:95-h, for the purpose of funding the Town of Chester’s Public Access Community Television related costs and to enable purchase of cable TV equipment, as may be approved from time to time by the governing board, and to raise and appropriate from the Town’s unassigned fund balance the amount of (whatever is in PACT Fund on day warrant finalized, but \$45,453 as of January Bank Statement) for deposit into said revolving fund. This sum to come from the June 30 fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2020, and no amount to be raised by taxation. All future revenues received from cable franchise fees shall be deposited into the Revolving Fund for Public Access Cable Television Fund and money in the fund shall be allowed to accumulate from year to year and shall not be considered to be part of the general fund unassigned fund balance. The treasurer shall have custody of all monies in the fund and shall pay out the same only upon order of the PACT Committee and Board of Selectman and no further legislative body approval is required to expend. These funds may be expended only for the purpose of providing public, educational, and governmental access television. Ballot vote required. If this Article passes, Warrant Article #15 shall be tabled.

<i>Estimated Tax Impact:</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>
<i>Recommended by Board of Selectmen</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 4 yes/ 0 no / 1 abstain</i>
<i>Recommended by Budget Committee</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 0 yes/ 5 no/ 0 abstain</i>

Article #14 – Rescind PACT Special Revenue Fund (Paper ballot required; Public Hearing required and scheduled for February 20th. If rescinded, any monies in fund will lapse to general fund.)

Special Warrant Article. Shall the Town vote to rescind the provisions of RSA 31:95-c to restrict 100% of revenues from the cable franchise fees paid by Comcast under the Cable Television Renewal Franchise between Comcast and the Town of Chester to expenditures for the purpose of providing public, educational, and governmental access television in the Town of Chester. This Article must pass by a 2/3 ballot vote. If Article 13 does not pass, this article shall be tabled.

<i>Estimated Tax Impact:</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>
<i>Recommended by Board of Selectmen</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 4 yes/ 1 no / 0 abstain</i>
<i>Recommended by Budget Committee</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 0 yes/ 5 no/ 0 abstain</i>

Article #15 – PACT

Special Warrant Article. Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of thirty-six thousand, nine hundred twenty-five dollars (\$36,925) for the purpose of providing public, educational, and governmental access television in the Town of Chester. Said funds to be withdrawn from the Special Revenue Fund known as the “PACT” Fund established at the 2003 Town Meeting, separate from the General Fund and funded by Comcast subscribers in the Town of Chester. If passed, this article will have no tax impact. If Article #13 passes, this Article shall be tabled.

Estimated Tax Impact: **\$0.00**
Recommended by Board of Selectmen **Tally Vote – 4 yes/ 0 no / 1 abstain**
Recommended by Budget Committee **Tally Vote – 5 yes/ 0 no/ 0 abstain**

Article #16 – Budget

Shall the Town raise and appropriate the Budget Committee recommended amount of four million nine hundred ninety-eight thousand six hundred fifty-five dollars (\$4,998,655) for the operating budget for the support of Town government for the payment of salaries and for the payment of statutory obligations of the Town. **Tally vote – 5 yes / 0 no / 0 abstain.** The Board of Selectmen recommends four million nine hundred ninety-eight thousand six hundred fifty-five dollars (\$4,998,655) by a Tally Vote – 5 yes / 0 no / 0 abstain. This article does not include appropriations voted in other warrant articles.

Article #17 – CIP Funding

Special Warrant Article. Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of seven hundred thousand dollars (\$700,00) to be added to the capital reserve fund known as the Town’s Municipal Capital Improvement Plan Capital Reserve Fund established at the 2013 Town Meeting.

Estimated Tax Impact: **\$0.00**
Recommended by Board of Selectmen **Tally Vote – 4 yes/ 0 no / 1 abstain**
Recommended by Budget Committee **Tally Vote – 5 yes/ 0 no/ 0 abstain**

Article #18 – CIP Projects

Special Warrant Article. Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of seven hundred eighty-four thousand, two hundred five dollars (\$784,205) for the following projects:

Library	Computer Upgrades	7,600
PACT	Equipment Upgrades	24,590
Police Department	Evidence Room Ventilation	6,000
Fire Department	Radios	69,000
Fire Department	Personal Protective Equipment	16,415
Highway Department	Asphalt Hotbox	35,000
Highway Department	Surveying & Engineering Services	10,000
Highway Department	Roadwork	600,000
Building Department	Zero-Turn Gas Lawnmower	15,600

And withdraw of seven hundred eighty-four thousand, two hundred five dollars (\$784,205) from the Municipal Capital Improvement Plan Capital Reserve Fund created for these purposes.

Estimated Tax Impact: **\$0.00**
Recommended by Board of Selectmen **Tally Vote – 5 yes/ 0 no / 0 abstain**
Recommended by Budget Committee **Tally Vote – 5 yes/ 0 no/ 0 abstain**

Article #19 – Highway CIP Funding

Special Warrant Article. Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of seven hundred fifty-one thousand, three hundred sixty-five dollars (\$751,365) to be added to the capital reserve fund known as the Highway Capital Improvement Plan Capital Reserve Fund established at the 2015 Town Meeting with One hundred fifty-one thousand, three hundred sixty-five dollars (\$151,365) which is the anticipated grant amount this year from the New Hampshire Highway Block Grant to be used to offset this appropriation and the remainder of six hundred thousand (\$600,000) to be raised through taxation.

<i>Estimated Tax Impact:</i>	<i>\$0.84</i>
<i>Recommended by Board of Selectmen</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 5 yes/ 0 no / 0 abstain</i>
<i>Recommended by Budget Committee</i>	<i>Tally Vote- 5 yes/ 0 no/ 0 abstain</i>

Article #20 – Highway CIP Projects

Special Warrant Article. Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of seven hundred fifty-one thousand, three hundred sixty-five dollars (\$751,365) for roadwork in the Town of Chester and withdraw seven hundred fifty-one thousand, three hundred sixty-five dollars (\$751,365) from the Highway Capital Improvement Plan Capital Reserve Fund created for these purposes.

<i>Estimated Tax Impact:</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>
<i>Recommended by Board of Selectmen</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 5 yes/ 0 no / 0 abstain</i>
<i>Recommended by Budget Committee</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 5 yes/ 0 no/ 0 abstain</i>

Article #21 – Petitioned Warrant Article – SB2 (Public Hearing scheduled for February 20th; ballot vote required; must pass by 3/5. Box must stay open one hour.)

Shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 40:13 (known as SB 2) to allow official ballot voting on all issues before the legislative body of the Town of Chester on the second Tuesday of March.

This Article must pass by a 3/5 ballot vote.

Article #22 – 300th Anniversary

Special Warrant Article. Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) to be added to the Capital Reserve Fund known as the 300th Anniversary Celebration Capital reserve Fund established at the 2013 Town Meeting.

<i>Estimated Tax Impact:</i>	<i>\$0.01</i>
<i>Recommended by Board of Selectmen</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 5 yes/ 0 no / 0 abstain</i>
<i>Recommended by Budget Committee</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 5 yes/ 0 no/ 0 abstain</i>

Article #23 – Roadside Tree Removal

Special Warrant Article. Shall the Town vote to establish an expendable trust fund under the provisions of RSA 31:19-a, to be known as the Roadside Tree Removal Fund, for the removal of any roadside tree or portion thereof in the Town's easement which is a Public safety hazard and a danger to the residents of the community, and further to raise and appropriate the sum of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) to be placed in this fund, and further to appoint the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from this fund.

<i>Estimated Tax Impact:</i>	<i>\$0.07</i>
<i>Recommended by Board of Selectmen</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 4 yes/ 0 no / 1 abstain</i>
<i>Recommended by Budget Committee</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 0 yes, 5 no/ 0 abstain</i>

Article #24 – Ortho Rectifying Maps

Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) for the purpose of Orthorectifying our Town tax maps. This will align (i.e., rectify) flat property lines with the topography of the land to fully utilize the Town's new GIS mapping system.

<i>Estimated Tax Impact:</i>	<i>\$0.02</i>
<i>Recommended by Board of Selectmen</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 4 yes/ 0 no / 1 abstain</i>
<i>Recommended by Budget Committee</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 0 yes/ 5 no/ 0 abstain</i>

Article #25 – Winter Road Maintenance Fund

Special Warrant Article. Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred five thousand dollars (\$105,000) to be added to the expendable trust fund known as the Winter Road Maintenance Fund established at the 2006 Town Meeting and increased at the 2017 Town Meeting for the purpose of plowing, salting, sanding, and general winter road maintenance in the Town of Chester. The Winter Road Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund shall not exceed one hundred five thousand dollars (\$105,000).

<i>Estimated Tax Impact:</i>	<i>\$0.15</i>
<i>Recommended by Board of Selectmen</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 5 yes/ 0 no / 0 abstain</i>
<i>Recommended by Budget Committee</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 4 yes/ 0 no/ 1 abstain</i>

Article #26 – Town Master Plan Capital Reserve Fund

Special Warrant Article. Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) to be added to the Town Master Plan Capital Reserve Fund established at the 2019 Town Meeting.

<i>Estimated Tax Impact:</i>	<i>\$0.03</i>
<i>Recommended by Board of Selectmen</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 5 yes/ 0 no / 0 abstain</i>
<i>Recommended by Budget Committee</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 5 yes/ 0 no/ 0 abstain</i>

Article #27 – Historic Building Capital Reserve Fund

Special Warrant Article. Shall the Town vote to establish a Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35 in order to fund the repair and restoration of the Town’s historic buildings, and to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to be placed in this fund. Further to authorize the transfer of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) from the June 30th, 2020 general unassigned fund balance and fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) from any surplus remaining from Fiscal Year 2019-2020 for this purpose with no amount to be raised from taxation. Further to authorize the Board of Selectmen to apply for, accept, and expend any grants for these projects that may be available. Further, to name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from this fund.

<i>Estimated Tax Impact:</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>
<i>Recommended by Board of Selectmen</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 5 yes/ 0 no / 0 abstain</i>
<i>Recommended by Budget Committee</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 5 yes/ 0 no/ 0 abstain</i>

Article #28 – Transportation Improvement Capital Reserve Fund (DRA wording. Public Hearing required and scheduled for Feb. 20th. Ballot vote required. The fee is a maximum of \$5.00; that would garner \$41,100 annually; a \$0.50 fee would garner \$4,110.)

Shall the Town vote to adopt the provisions of RSA 261:153 VI to collect an additional fee of a maximum of \$5.00 for the purpose of supporting a municipal and transportation improvement fund, which shall be deposited into a capital reserve fund established for the purpose of supporting Town transportation improvement; and shall the Town authorize the establishment of this Capital reserve Fund (pursuant to RSA Chapter 35) to be known as the “Transportation Improvement Capital Reserve Fund” for the purpose of funding said improvements; and further to appoint the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from this fund. Ballot vote required.

<i>Estimated Tax Impact:</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>
<i>Recommended by Board of Selectmen</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 5 yes/ 0 no / 0 abstain</i>
<i>Recommended by Budget Committee</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 0 yes/ 5 no/ 0 abstain</i>

Article #29 – Great Hill Cemetery Maintenance Fund (proposed by GHC Trustees. They had wished to seed fund with \$39k held by the Trustees of the Trust Funds but Town Counsel disallowed. They still want the trust fund and will seed it themselves from their checkbook. They want nothing from taxation. They plan on using the 25% for mowing, etc. and the 75% for expansion, etc.)

Shall the Town vote to establish a trust fund under the provisions of RSA 31:19-a and RSA 289:2-a to be known as the Great Hill Cemetery Maintenance and Expansion Fund for the general maintenance and capital expansion of said cemetery, and to raise and appropriate one dollar (\$1.00) to be placed in this fund, and further to appoint the Great Hill Cemetery Board of Trustees or the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from this fund.

308 ***Estimated Tax Impact:*** ***\$0.00***
309 ***Recommended by Board of Selectmen*** ***Tally Vote – yes/ no / abstain***
310 ***Recommended by Budget Committee*** ***Tally Vote – 0 yes/ 5 no/ 0 abstain***

311

312 **Article #30 – Historical Document Digitization**

313

314 Special Warrant Article. Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of eleven thousand five hundred
315 dollars (\$11,500) for the purpose of beginning the digitization of the Town’s historical records collection,
316 and further to authorize the Board of Selectman to apply for, accept, and expend any grants for this
317 project that may be available.

318

319 ***Estimated Tax Impact:*** ***\$0.02***
320 ***Recommended by Board of Selectmen*** ***Tally Vote – 5 yes/ 0 no / 0 abstain***
321 ***Recommended by Budget Committee*** ***Tally Vote – 5 yes/ 0 no/ 0 abstain***

322

323 **Article #31 – Pay Matrix**

324

325 Shall the Town vote to adopt the concept of a Pay Grade Matrix as development by the Pay Grade
326 Matrix Working Group and approved by the Board of Selectmen in September 2019. This Matrix acts as
327 a budgetary tool by standardizing Town Employee positions with comparable Towns and keeps salaries
328 in line with market rates.

329

330 ***Estimated Tax Impact:*** ***\$0.00***
331 ***Recommended by Board of Selectmen*** ***Tally Vote – 5 yes/ 0 no / 0 abstain***
332 ***Recommended by Budget Committee*** ***Tally Vote – 0 yes/ 0 no/ 5 abstain***

333

334 **Article #32 – Petitioned Warrant Article – Indigenous Peoples Day**

335

336 **Article #33 – Reports**

337

338 Article #32 and Article #33 did not require a vote from the Budget Committee.

339

340 **Adjournment**

341

342 **Chair Weider made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Dobbins seconded the motion. The vote**
343 **was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.**

344 The meeting adjourned at 9:43 PM.

345 Respectfully submitted,

346 C. Molly Qualters,
347 Recording Secretary